



Francophone

Immigration STRATEGY



MEETING OUR OBJECTIVES



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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



I am pleased to release Meeting our Objectives: Francophone Immigration Strategy. This approach outlines the Government of Canada's vision for Francophone immigration in Francophone minority communities. It is a comprehensive plan to achieve our goals of attracting and retaining more French-speaking newcomers.

As Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, I have met with French-speaking newcomers and members of Francophone communities from coast to coast to coast. Through numerous discussions, I have listened to the diverse experiences and needs of these individuals and communities. I have also witnessed their determination to contribute to our country's diversity and inclusion.

The Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023: Investing in our Future, provided nearly \$500 million over five years in support of official languages, including \$40.8 million for Francophone immigration initiatives. These historic investments attest to the Government of Canada's commitment to promoting French and English – our official languages – and enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities.

Our government remains committed to the principle of “par et pour”, ensuring that services for Francophones are offered by Francophones. I am proud of our achievements to date.

We are investing up to \$11 million over five years for pre-arrival settlement services for French-speaking newcomers. A Francophone organization will be able to provide French services to French-speaking newcomers arriving at Toronto Pearson International Airport. We are developing better access to language testing for prospective French-speaking applicants to economic immigration programs. And we were pleased with the overwhelming response to our Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative.

Canada's Francophone Immigration Strategy will expand existing initiatives and address current gaps. Actions such as the Francophone Integration Pathway will also strengthen our commitment to deliver high-quality settlement services to newcomers across the country.

Most importantly, this strategy will ensure a strong focus on innovation, evidence-based policy making and improved results. This strategy will guide Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's efforts in the years to come.

I look forward to continuing to advance our collective commitment to Canada's linguistic duality and Francophone immigration.

The Honourable Ahmed Hussein

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship



Introduction

Linguistic duality and the strengthening of the country's bilingual character are rooted in the vitality of official language minority communities. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is committed to contributing to the development of these communities, as well as to encouraging Francophone immigration outside Quebec¹. These commitments are anchored in the priorities of the Government of Canada and in the objectives of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Official Languages Act.

Official languages enhance diversity and inclusion, and give Canada a competitive advantage. Most Canadians agree that having two official languages is positive for Canada's international image and makes Canada a more welcoming country for immigrants².

In 2018, there were some 300 million French speakers worldwide—an increase of 9.6% compared to 2014.

Spoken on all continents, French is experiencing significant growth and is one of the leading global languages. Meanwhile, English remains widely recognized as a lingua franca around the world. With two official languages, Canada is well positioned to attract and retain more French-speaking and bilingual immigrants.

Collaboration with various partners has helped to shape IRCC's vision of Francophone immigration and led to the adoption of a target of 4.4% of immigrants outside Quebec to be French-speaking by 2023. Over the next five years, the Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future will strengthen these efforts by allocating \$40.8 million in additional funding.

These historic investments will allow IRCC—in close collaboration with provinces, territories and Francophone communities³—to expand existing initiatives, test new ways of doing things and maximize collaboration with key partners. This will result in a strengthened and more consistent approach, focused on achieving the best outcomes for newcomers and for Francophone communities.

- 1 The Government of Canada supports the vitality of Francophone minority communities and English-speaking communities in Quebec. Its role in immigration and integration in Quebec is set out in the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens.
- 2 Infographic: What Canadians think about bilingualism and the Official Languages Act, www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/en/statistics/infographics/what-canadians-think-about-bilingualism-and-ola.
- 3 The expression “Francophone communities” refers to Francophone and Acadian communities in Canada outside Quebec.

Objectives

The Francophone Immigration Strategy aims to achieve three main objectives to support the vitality of Francophone communities:

1. Increase Francophone immigration to reach a target of 4.4% of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec by 2023.
2. Support the successful integration and retention of French-speaking newcomers.
3. Strengthen the capacity of Francophone communities.

Consultations

In recent years, IRCC has held numerous consultations to get a better understanding of the immigration needs and priorities of Francophone communities. Between October 2017 and January 2018, IRCC conducted consultations with more than 150 stakeholders. The views shared helped to identify the objectives of the Francophone Immigration Strategy and to refine many of the measures outlined in this strategy.

Building on this momentum, IRCC initiated co-planning sessions in 2018 through the Réseaux en immigration francophone (Francophone Immigration Networks) and regional Francophone settlement summits. This innovative engagement approach has supported the ongoing development and implementation of settlement and integration initiatives.

1. Strengthened selection tools

IRCC is pursuing its efforts to increase admissions of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec. To this end, IRCC will advance **an approach focused on selection mechanisms that favour French-speaking candidates**.

1.1 Additional points in the Express Entry system

In June 2017, IRCC decided to award additional points in the Express Entry system for strong French-language skills⁴, with even more points for candidates who also have good English-language skills. This was a fundamental change to IRCC's selection policies and is yielding encouraging results.

IRCC will continue to **monitor these outcomes closely and will examine additional measures to meet the target if needed**.

1.2 Better access to French tests

In the fall of 2018, IRCC designated a second French-language tester for applicants to economic immigration programs. Having a second French-language tester will help **make the tests more accessible and affordable for future economic immigration applicants**.

⁴ IRCC, Express Entry improvement: Spring 2017, Backgrounder.

1.3 Support for temporary residence and transition to permanent residence

Temporary residents, including international students and temporary workers, contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of Francophone communities. In June 2016, IRCC launched the Mobilité Francophone stream⁵ of the International Mobility Program. This stream enables French-speaking foreign nationals to gain Canadian work experience, which can help them qualify for permanent residence.

IRCC **will raise awareness of the Mobilité Francophone stream** among Canadian employers and French-speaking foreign nationals. IRCC will also use **targeted communications** to inform French-speaking international students and temporary workers about federal, provincial and territorial immigration programs and the services for which they are eligible. Lastly, it will test **new approaches to facilitate links** between French-speaking temporary residents and Francophone communities.

2. Targeted expansion of promotion and recruitment support



Since 2003, IRCC's office at the Embassy of Canada in France has organized an annual Destination Canada mobility forum. At this event, participants from various countries can learn about the diversity of Canada, Francophone communities and Canadian immigration programs. They also have the opportunity to meet Canadian employers, Francophone associations, economic development organizations, and provincial and territorial government representatives.

As part of the Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013–2018, IRCC has intensified its year-round promotion and recruitment support activities, both in Canada and abroad. Many of these activities are carried out in close collaboration with Canadian and international partners. This includes organizing liaison trips to inform Canadian employers of the possibilities of recruiting skilled workers abroad and supporting special provincial, territorial and community initiatives such as Destination Acadie and the Destination Ontario pilot.

To attract more French-speaking foreign nationals, IRCC will continue **targeted expansion of promotion and recruitment support in Canada and internationally. This will include new Web content and digital advertising campaigns aimed at potential French-speaking candidates.** To ensure that its promotion and recruitment support efforts have a positive impact, IRCC will also put in place **initiatives to improve the experience of French-speaking clients.**



⁵ This stream exempts employers from the Labour Market Impact Assessment process when they hire French-speaking or bilingual workers from abroad to undertake management, professional or skilled employment outside Quebec.

3. Joint action with key partners

IRCC recognizes the vital role played by many partners and stakeholders in the success of Francophone immigration.

3.1 Mobilizing federal, provincial and territorial partners

In March 2018, the Government of Canada released the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023. This government-wide plan aims to support the vitality of official language minority communities, recognizing the role of immigration.

Following forums on Francophone immigration, one in Moncton in 2017 and another in Toronto in 2018, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for immigration and those responsible for Canadian Francophonie adopted a Federal/Provincial/Territorial Action Plan for Increasing Francophone Immigration Outside of Quebec. A symposium on Francophone immigration brought together government officials and Francophone communities in March 2018. IRCC also signed French-speaking immigrant annexes as part of its bilateral agreements with New Brunswick and Ontario.

To build on this progress, IRCC **will strengthen coordination and collaboration with federal, provincial and territorial partners**. This will include increased bilateral and multilateral engagement with interested provincial and territorial partners, active participation in interdepartmental official languages networks and targeted projects. IRCC will also promote dialogue with provinces and territories wishing to select more French-speaking immigrants, on associated challenges and opportunities.

3.2 Strengthening engagement in the spirit of “by and for Francophones”

According to many stakeholders, the “by and for Francophones” principle should apply from the design of policies and programs through to their implementation.

This ranges from promotional activities and tools that direct potential candidates to Francophone communities, to French-language settlement services offered primarily by Francophone organizations. A number also voiced the need to include immigrants and members of French-speaking ethnocultural communities, and to establish funding processes that take into account the specific needs of French-speaking communities and newcomers.

“By building the capacities of Francophone organizations, we are promoting services of equal quality for French-speaking newcomers”.

– Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, Symposium on Francophone Immigration, March 22, 2018





IRCC is committed to ensuring **meaningful and timely participation of Francophone communities in the development of policies and programs, including the delivery of services.**

In addition to strengthening the role of these communities in a consolidated Francophone

In June 2018, IRCC established a virtual platform to collect innovative ideas from its Francophone partners.

integration pathway, IRCC will review its engagement activities and mechanisms. This approach will focus on sharing expertise, joint planning and assessment of results. It will also include new terms of reference for the IRCC-Francophone Minority Communities Committee.

4. Enhanced resettlement and settlement pathways

In 2017 to 2018, IRCC provided \$28 million in funding to more than 50 Francophone organizations to deliver a range of direct and indirect settlement services. In addition, IRCC supports the Accueil francophone du Manitoba so that it can provide resettlement assistance services to government-assisted refugees.

4.1 Francophone integration pathway

In March 2018, the Government of Canada announced, among its priorities, the consolidation of a Francophone integration pathway, which spans from pre-arrival to citizenship. To this end, IRCC will aim to **facilitate linkages between French-speaking newcomers and Francophone communities, and to strengthen the delivery of quality settlement services “by and for Francophones”**. It will also provide detailed information so that all newcomers can make informed decisions about their settlement and integration.

This approach—which focuses both on the client and on the vitality of Francophone communities—is supported by investments set out in the Government of Canada’s Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023 and IRCC’s Settlement Program.

Between June and October 2018, some 350 stakeholders took part in 10 co-planning sessions on the Francophone integration pathway.

4.1.1 Improved and adapted settlement services

In November 2018, IRCC announced the creation of a **new service delivery model for French-speaking immigrants to help them prepare for their arrival in Canada**. In the same vein, IRCC announced **improved settlement services for French-speaking immigrants arriving at Pearson International Airport in Toronto**.

Proficiency in both official languages is of great importance to French-speaking newcomers in order to achieve their integration objectives. IRCC will **increase the availability of and access to official language training that meets the needs of French-speaking newcomers**. A new service delivery model will allow these clients to take a refresher course in one language and a beginner course in the other, depending on their needs.

Thanks to the investments in the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023, the department enhanced language training services by working with existing service providers, and launched a call for funding applications for new adapted services across Canada.

In addition, IRCC **will increase the availability of settlement services across the country and will explore innovative approaches for delivering Francophone settlement services in rural areas**.



4.1.2 The Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative

IRCC will support the creation of spaces across the country where French-speaking newcomers will feel welcome. This new initiative, supported by the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023, will **make Francophone communities central to the decision-making process** with respect to the reception and retention of newcomers in their local communities. It could also promote projects to support clients with special needs, including women, youth, visible minorities and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or two-spirited.

The first phase of implementation focuses on preparing communities. Starting in 2020, the initiative will support projects that will foster community partnerships. These projects will be supported by a **flexible, community-based funding model**.

4.1.3 Greater support for the Francophone settlement sector

IRCC will seek to establish an approach to support the Francophone settlement sector at the national level. This approach **will build the capacity of Réseaux en immigration francophone and increase professional development for Francophone service provider organizations**.



4.2 Resettlement and integration of refugees

Stakeholders expressed a keen interest in contributing to the resettlement of refugees in various ways—everything from providing services to refugees, to private sponsorship of refugees. In 2018, IRCC undertook the development of an **action plan to strengthen its approach to the resettlement and integration of refugees** in Francophone communities.

IRCC will ensure **sustained engagement of Francophone communities and other key players in the refugee resettlement sector.**

IRCC's efforts will also focus on better informing resettled refugees to facilitate their integration into Francophone communities. Lastly, IRCC will support Francophone communities and Francophone service providers so that they are equipped to meet the needs of resettled refugees.

5. Coherent policies supported by evidence and outcomes

In January 2017, IRCC amended its immigration application forms to collect data under a **new measure of the definition of “French-speaking immigrant”**⁶. This more inclusive definition will better reflect the reality of Francophone immigration and will more clearly identify the main source countries of French-speaking immigrants.

In 2017 to 2018, IRCC identified a central policy lead responsible for Francophone immigration. This group ensures an integrated approach to horizontal policy development and implementation.

To support future policy development, IRCC **will improve the collection of official language data on temporary residents.** The department will also continue its activities related to research on official language minority communities.

IRCC will develop **new tools and mechanisms to monitor progress and measure the performance** of this strategy. Indicators will also be developed for the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Action Plan for Increasing Francophone Immigration. Furthermore, the strategy will be included as part of the horizontal evaluation of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018–2023.

Lastly, IRCC **will increase the systematic communication of Francophone immigration outcomes,** including progress toward the achievement of the French-speaking immigrant target and broader results. This will be done through public reporting, such as the departmental results plan and the Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, and through meetings with partners and key stakeholders.

6 IRCC's definition of a French-speaking immigrant is an immigrant for whom French is the first Canadian official language of usage. This includes permanent residents who declare knowledge of “French only” as their official language or those who declare knowledge of “French and English” as their official languages, as well as those who declare French as the language that they are the most at ease to use.